

AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
BATTLE OF LUNDY'S LANE
FOUGHT IN 1814,
BETWEEN THE BRITISH & AMERICAN ARMIES,

FROM THE BEST AND MOST AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

DRUMMONDVILLE:
PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE WEEKLY REPORTER.

1858.

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To the Reader.

A great want has been felt by visitors to a spot so celebrated in History as the Battle Field of Lundy's Lane, of an impartial description of that great conflict, where the British and American Armies met in the war of 1814. In consequence, the Proprietor of the Observatory on the spot where the battle was fought, in order to facilitate the explanations required by visitors, has thought it desirable to select from the despatches of the Generals of the respective armies, the report of each to his Government at the time.

The first selection is from the Despatch of General Drummond, the Commander of the British Army, and the second is from the Despatch of General Brown, the Commander of the American Army.

To the Reader.

A great secret has been told by a letter to a spot so situated in this
town as the Battle of Marston, a scene of a important description
of that great conflict, where the British and Saxon armies met in
the year of 1141. In consequence the Report of the Officer of the
on the spot where the battle was fought, in order to facilitate the
plans of the British army, a plan of the battle is here presented
the publication of the General of the British army, the report of
each to his Government at the time.

The first edition from the Report of the General of the British
Commander of the British Army, and the second from the Report
of General of the British Army, the Commander of the British Army.

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**EXTRACT FROM THE DESPATCH OF GENERAL
DRUMMOND.**

From Smith's "Canada, Past, Present, and Future."

I embarked on board His Majesty's schooner *Netly*, at York, on Sunday evening, the 24th instant, and reached Niagara at day-break the following morning. Finding from Lieutenant-Colonel Tucker, that Major-General Riall was understood to be moving towards the Falls of Niagara, to support the advance of his division, which he had pushed on to that place, on the preceeding evening, I ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison, with the Eighty-ninth Regiment, and a detachment of the Royals and King's, drawn from Forts George and Mississauga, to proceed to the same point, in order that with the united force I might act against the enemy on my arrival, if it should be found expedient. I ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Tucker, at the same time, to proceed on the right bank of the river, with three hundred of the Forty-First, and about two hundred of the Royal Scots, and a body of Indian warriors, supported on the river by a party of armed seamen, under Captain Dobbs, R. N. The object of this movement was to disperse or capture a body of the enemy, which was encamped at Lewiston. Some unavoidable delay having occurred in the march of the troops up the right bank, the enemy had moved off previous to Lieutenant-Colonel Tucker's arrival.

Having refreshed the troops at Queenstown, and having brought across the Forty-first, Royals and Indians, I sent back the Forty-first and Hundredth regiments to form the garrisons of the forts, and moved with the Eighty-ninth, and detachments of the Royals and King's, and light company of the Forty-first, in all about eight hundred men, to join Major-General Riall's division at the Falls.

When arrived within a few miles of that position, I met a report from Major-General Riall that the enemy was advancing in great force. I immediately pushed on, and joined the head of Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison's column, just as it reached the road leading towards the Beaver

Dam, over the summit of the hill at Lundy's Lane. Instead of the whole of Major-General Riall's division, which I expected to find occupying this position, I found it almost all in the occupation of the enemy, whose columns were within six hundred yards of the top of the hill, and the surrounding woods filled with his light troops. The advance of Major-General Riall's division, consisting of the Glengarry light infantry and incorporated militia, having commenced their retreat upon Fort George, I countermanded these corps, and formed the Eighty-ninth and the Royal Scots and Forty-first light companies in the rear of the hill, their left resting on the great road; my two twenty-four pounder brass field guns a little advanced in front of the centre on the summit of the hill; the Glengarry light infantry on the right, the battalion of incorporated Militia, and the detachment of the King's Regiment on the left of the great road; the squadron of Nineteenth Light Dragoons in the rear of the left, on the road. I had scarcely completed this formation, when the whole front was warmly and closely engaged. The enemy's principal efforts were directed against our left and centre. After repeated attacks, the troops on the left were partially forced back, and the enemy gained a momentary possession of the road. This gave him, however, no material advantage, as the troops which had been forced back formed in the rear of the Eighty-ninth Regiment, fronting the road and securing the flank. It was during this short interval that Major-General Riall, having received a severe wound, was intercepted as he was passing to the rear by a party of the enemy's cavalry and made prisoner. In the centre, the repeated and determined attacks of the enemy, were met by the Eighty-ninth Regiment, the detachments of the Royals and King's, and the light company of the Forty-first Regiment, with the most perfect steadiness and intrepid gallantry, and the enemy was constantly repulsed with very heavy loss. In so determined a manner were these attacks directed against our guns, that our artillerymen were bayoneted in the act of loading, and the muzzles of the enemy's guns were advanced within a few yards of ours. The darkness of the night, during this extraordinary conflict, occasioned several uncommon incidents: our troops having for a moment been pushed back, some of our guns remained for a few minutes in the enemy's hands; they were, however, not only quickly recovered, but the two pieces, a six-pounder,

and a five and a half-inch howitzer, which the enemy had brought up, were captured by us, together with several tumbrils; and in limbering up our guns, at one period, one of the enemy's six-pounders was put by mistake upon a limber of ours, and one of our six-pounders limbered on one of his; by which means the pieces were exchanged; and thus though we captured two of his guns, yet as he obtained one of ours, we have gained only one gun.

About nine o'clock, the action having commenced at six, there was a short intermission of firing, during which it appears the enemy was employed in bringing up the whole of his remaining force, and he shortly afterwards renewed his attack, with fresh troops, but was every where repulsed, with equal gallantry and success. About this period the remainder of Major-General Riall's division which had been ordered to retire on the advance of the enemy, consisting of the Hundred and Third Regiment, under Colonel Scott; the head-quarter division of the Royal Scots, the head-quarter division of the Eighth, flank companies of the Hundred and Fourth, some detachments of militia, under Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, Inspecting Field-Officer, joined the troops engaged. The enemy's efforts to carry the hill were continued until about midnight, when he had suffered so severely from the superior steadiness and discipline of His Majesty's troops, that he gave up the contest, and retreated with great precipitation to his camp, beyond the Chippawa. On the following day he abandoned his camp, threw the greatest part of his baggage, camp-equipage and provisions into the rapids; and, having set fire to Street's mills and destroyed the bridge at Chippawa, continued his retreat in great disorder towards Fort Erie. My light troops, cavalry and Indians are detached in pursuit, and to harass his retreat.

INCIDENTS FROM MANSFIELD'S LIFE OF GENERAL SCOTT,

PUBLISHED BY A. S. BARNES AND CO., NEW YORK.

The army of the north had scarcely rested from its labors at Chippawa, when it was called to the still more sanguinary field of Niagara. The second day after the battle of the 5th, the American troops forced their way over Chippawa River. In this, Scott's brigade led, and the enemy retreated before him.

In the afternoon of the 25th of July, amidst general relaxation, General Brown received a note from a colonel of militia, whose regiment occupied two or three posts on the American side of the Niagara, stating in the most precise terms, that the enemy had thrown a thousand men across from Queenstown to Lewistown, nine miles below Chippawa, for some object not exactly understood. Brown conjectured that there was an intention to capture our magazines at Scholsser, and to intercept supplies coming down from Buffalo. In order to recall him from this object, Brown immediately determined to threaten the forts at the mouth of Niagara. In less than twenty minutes Scott's command was put in motion for that purpose. His force consisted of four small battalions, under Colonel Brady, and Majors Jesup, Leavenworth, and M'Neil; Captain Towson's artillery, and Captain Harris's detachment of regular and volunteer cavalry; in all amounting to thirteen hundred men. There was not time to call in the guards which belonged to those corps.

About two miles from the camp, and just above the Falls, Scott discovered a few British officers, mounted, who, as it turned out, were in advance to reconnoitre. He soon learned that the enemy was in some little force below, and only intercepted from the view by a narrow wood.

In this situation, Scott for a moment reflected on what course should be pursued. He was instructed to march rapidly on the forts, under positive information, (given as we have narrated to General Brown,) that Riall had, three hours before, thrown half his force across the Niagara. Reflecting that the whole had been beaten on the 5th inst., he

lost no time in reconnoitering, but dashed forward to disperse what he thought was the remnant of the British army opposed to him.

After dispatching Assistant Adjutant-General Jones to General Brown with the information that the enemy was in front, he proceeded to pass the wood, just below Forsythe's House. There he was greatly astonished to find, directly in front, drawn up in order of battle, on Lundy's Lane, a larger force even than that he had encountered at Chippawa twenty days before! The position he was in was extremely critical. To stand fast was out of the question, being already under a heavy fire of the enemy's artillery and musketry. To retreat was equally hazardous; for there is always, in such a case, the probability of confusion, and, at this time, the danger of creating a panic in the reserve, then supposed to be coming up, and which had not been in the previous battle.

Scott saw that no measure but one of boldness would succeed. He therefore determined to maintain the battle against superior numbers and position till the reserve came up, thus giving General Riall the idea that the whole American army was at hand. This would prevent him from profiting by his numerical strength to attack our flanks and rear. He would thus lose the initial, a matter of no small importance in military enterprises. The scheme succeeded. For a long time the enemy was kept on the defensive, till the American reserve had come up and entered into the action.

In the meanwhile Scott had sent back to General Brown, Lieutenant Douglass, as well as Major Jones, to report the condition of affairs. The first was to report that the remnant of Riall's army was maneuvering to protect the detachment thrown over the Niagara; the second was to inform the general, that so far from being diminished, the British army was actually re-inforced, and thus to hasten up the reserve.

The battle began about forty minutes before sunset, and, like its predecessor at Chippawa, was the closing drama of a long and warm summer's day. Like that too, it signalized among the affairs of men a spot which in the world of nature had been rendered illustrious by one of the great and glorious works of God. When the battle was about to begin, just as the setting sun sent his red beams from the

west, they fell upon the spray, which continually goes up, like intense, from the deep, dashing torrent of Niagara. The bright light was divided into its primal hues, and a rainbow rose from the waters, encircling the head of the advancing column! In a more superstitious age, such a sign would have been regarded, like the Roman auguries, as a precursor of victory. Even now, this bow of promise furnished the inspiration of hope, with the colors of beauty.

The line which now opened its fire upon Scott, at the distance of one hundred and fifty paces, was already eighteen hundred strong. It was well posted in Lundy's Lane, a ridge at right angles with the Niagara River, a little below the cataract. Its left was on the road parallel to the river, with a space covered with brushwood, of some two hundred yards, between. Scott observing this interval, soon ordered Major Jesup, sustained by Colonel Brady, to take advantage of it, and, concealed by the bushes and twilight, to turn the enemy's left. The other battalions had been before promptly deployed into line, and the action joined by it (Brady on the right) and Towson's artillery. The small detachments of cavalry on both sides were held in reserve. The enemy, finding after some time that he outflanked us on the left, threw forward a battalion to take us in flank and rear. Scott, although with inferior numbers, caused this movement to be promptly met and repelled by Major M'Neil's battalion, but with great loss on both sides. At the same moment, the action in front was desperately contested by Brady, now in line, and by Leavenworth and Towson. Major Jesup had succeeded in his movement. He had taken Major-General Riall, and several other prisoners, and then gallantly charged back, (cutting off a portion of the enemy's left wing,) reappearing, and resuming his position in line.

The battle which had commenced before sunset continued into the night. Twilight had gone, and it was now nine o'clock. The enemy's right had been beaten back from its flank assault with great loss. His left was turned and cut off. His centre alone remained firm. It was posted on a ridge, and supported by nine pieces of artillery. Three battalions of Drummond's reinforcements had already arrived and a fourth was only a few miles behind. Such was the state of the field, when Major-General Brown arrived, a little in advance of the

reserve. He insisted on having all the particulars, reported to him previously by the detached staff-officers mentioned, explained and confirmed to him by the lips of Scott. At this point, General Brown in his official report takes up the narrative, from his own personal observation.

We select a few extracts in continuance of the history.

After speaking of Scott's brigade, and its position in the first part of the battle, he says—"apprehending that these corps were much exhausted, and knowing that they had suffered severely, I determined to interpose a new line with the advancing troops, and thus disengage General Scott, and hold his brigade in reserve. Orders were accordingly given to General Ripley. The enemy's artillery at this moment occupied a hill, which gave him great advantages, and was the key to the whole position. It was supported by a line of infantry. To secure the victory it was necessary to carry this artillery and seize the height. This duty was assigned to Colonel Miller.

"He (Colonel Miller) advanced steadily and gallantly to his object and carried the height and the cannon. General Ripley brought up the 23d, which had faltered, to his support, and the enemy disappeared from before them. . . . The enemy rallying his forces, and as is believed, having received reinforcements, now attempted to drive us from our position and regain his artillery. Our line was unshaken and the enemy repulsed. Two other attempts, having the same object, had the same issue. General Scott was again engaged in repelling the former of these; and the last I saw of him on the field of battle, he was near the head of his column, and giving to its march a direction that would have placed him on the enemy's right. . . . Having been for some time wounded, and being a good deal exhausted by loss of blood, it became my wish to devolve the command on General Scott, and retire from the field, but, on inquiry, I had the misfortune to learn that he was disabled by wounds; I therefore kept my post, and had the satisfaction to see the enemy's last effort repulsed."

The crisis of this engagement was the moment when the enemy's battery, which from its position commanded the field of action, was stormed by Miller's regiment. This charge was one of the finest achievements of the American army. General Brown said to the gallant Miller—"Sir, can you take that battery?" "I will try," was the

reply of the bluff soldier—a phrase now become familiar to all American lips. Scott, who was perfectly acquainted with the ground, conducted Miller, in the darkness of the night, some distance, till he had the right direction. He then returned to renew the attack in front, in order to favor the movement of Miller.

The enemy's battery being taken, and the ridge previously occupied by the enemy being gained, the American army changed position. It was now drawn up nearly at right angles to the lane, with its back to the river. Scott was on the right, Ripley in the centre, and Porter, with the militia, on the left. In this new position, the American line generally acted on the defensive. The British desired to recover the ground they had lost, and made several assaults. These were as often repulsed, but the enemy would again rally and return to the charge.

It was in one of these contests General Brown had last seen Scott. About that time, the latter had twice formed small portions of his brigade into column, advanced, charged the British line, also advancing, pierced it, and compelled it to fall back. In such a battle, with such impetuous courage, Scott was necessarily exposed to all the dangers of the field. Two horses were killed under him. In the midst of the action, he was wounded in the side. At eleven o'clock in the night, he was disabled by a wound from a musket-ball through the left shoulder. His aid, Lieutenant Worth, and his brigade-major, Smith, were also both severely wounded.

The contest closed by the possession of the field of battle by the Americans, and the capture of the enemy's cannon.

The world has seen mightier armies moved over more memorable fields, and followed by louder notes of the far resounding trumpet of fame; but a bloodier scene for those engaged, a severer trial of courage and of discipline, or one whose action was more closely associated with the sublime and beautiful in nature, the world has not seen. The armies were drawn out near the shores of that rapid river whose current mingles lake with lake. Hard by, was that cataract whose world of waters rushes over the precipice, and, whirling, roars into the gulf below! The ceaseless spray rises up, like incense to the eternal Father! The beams of sun, and moon, and stars, fall occasionally on that spray, and are sent back in many-colored hues to the source of light!

So it was when, wheeling into the field of battle, the slant beams of the setting sun, returning from the spray, encircled the advancing column with rainbow colors! The sun went down, to many an eye, no more to rise on earth!

With the darkness came the greater rage of battle—charge after charge was made. For a time the faint beams of the moon struggled with the smoke, and gave a little light to the combatants; but it was but little. The moon itself became obscured, and no light, save the rapid flashes of musket and cannon, pierced the heavy clouds,

The fight raged in the darkness of the night. From the height on the ridge, the battery of the enemy still poured its deadly fire.

It was then that the gallant Miller said "I will try." It was then that Scott piloted his column through darkness to Lundy's Lane. It was then that brave regiment charged to the cannon's mouth. The battery was taken. The victory rests with the American army.

It was midnight. The battle is ended. The army, faint and weary, drags itself from the bloody plain. The well sink to their couch to dream of homes far away! The wounded groan in their painful hospitals. The dead rest till the last trumpet shall summon them to the last array! The warrior, with his garments rolled in blood, has left the scene of struggles, pains, and death! Some kind friend may have sought him, whether alive or dead; but the war-drum had ceased to beat; the artillery ceased to roll; and now the solemn, sonorous fall of Niagara is to the dead their requiem, and to the living their song of glory!

The battle of Niagara has been, by mistake or accident, commonly called in the United States, the battle of Bridgewater. In the official report of the British General it was called the battle of Lundy's Lane. It has been usage, however, to call a battle, or other important event, from the most remarkable object near the scene of action. Fought, as this battle was, near the mighty cataract which makes one of the wonders of nature, on either side of the Atlantic; fought, too, with a courage and constancy worthy of such an association, why should it not be named from those loud, sounding waters? Let it then be called **THE BATTLE OF NIAGARA**. Let the memory of the dead, and the fame of the living, roll on with those waters to the distant future!